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SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

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SUBJECT: CTAG MEETING HELD IN ARMENIA

REF: STATE 14279

**¶11. (U) Sensitive but unclassified, please protect
accordingly.**

SUMMARY

¶12. (SBU) Post convened a coordination meeting of the Counter-Terrorism Action Group (CTAG) in Armenia February 2 in advance of the capital-level CTAG meeting to be held February 20 per reftel. Representatives of CTAG embassies present in Armenia (France, Germany, Italy, Russia, and the United Kingdom), and representatives of the Government of Armenia attended the coordination meeting. Each CTAG member identified his embassy's respective counter-terrorism related assistance, and discussed with GOAM officials potential areas of future cooperation. Counter-terrorism assistance to Armenia, apart from U.S.- funded training and Export and Border Security programs and Russian assistance within the framework of Commonwealth of Independent States, remains limited. GOAM officials highlighted the importance of continued training programs, and supported further cooperation in several areas, including equipment donations, increased intelligence sharing, assistance in preventing a scientific "brain-drain", and the strengthening of Armenian regulatory agencies. End summary.

OVERVIEW OF G-8 ASSISTANCE

¶13. (SBU) The United States and Russia maintain the largest counter-terrorism (CT) assistance programs to Armenia. Other CTAG states have limited their CT-related support to security assistance at Zvartnots International Airport in Yerevan, and military training within the NATO Partnership for Peace framework. Following is the current CT support provided by CTAG members to Armenia:

France

- France has a small program at Zvartnots International Airport it began in 2003 to combat the use of fraudulent travel documents.

Germany

- Germany has a cooperative program with Russian Border Guards and Armenian Passport Control (OVIR) at Zvartnots International Airport to combat fraudulent travel documents.

- Germany maintains joint military cooperation programs with the Armenian Ministry of Defense to train the Armenian peace-keeping detachment. The program has a limited CT-training component.

Italy

- An Italian Embassy representative reported that they have no current CT-related assistance programs.

Russia

- Russia has an extensive CT partnership with Armenia within the framework of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). Russia and Armenia participate in intelligence sharing and joint military and law enforcement training programs through the CIS anti-terrorism center.

- Russian and Armenian authorities routinely hold bi-lateral meetings to discuss joint CT initiatives.

- Russia and Armenia cooperate on border security initiatives. Russian Border Guards patrol Armenia's borders with Turkey and Iran. Armenian and Russian Border Guards seek increased inter-operability.

- Russia donates and sells large amounts of military

and law enforcement equipment to Armenia for CT efforts.

United Kingdom

- The United Kingdom has no current CT-related assistance programs in Armenia.

United States

- RSO reported that Armenia became a participant in the Bureau of Diplomatic Security's Anti-Terrorism Assistance Programs in April 2002. Under these programs, the State Department has provided CT-training to approximately 250 Armenian law enforcement officials of the National Police and National Security Service.

- The EXBS Program Advisor reported that approximately USD 1.3 million in CT related assistance programs in 2004. EXBS reported extensive cooperation with the Armenian National Security Service, Border Guard Service, Customs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Emergency Management Service, and Nuclear Regulatory Agency to enhance border security and anti-proliferation efforts. EXBS has coordinated large equipment donations, including radios, ground sensors, generators and vehicles, to promote these efforts directed primarily at points of entry into Armenia. EXBS hopes to expand its training programs to include Russian Border Guards in the coming year.

- DAO reported that the United States and Armenia have developed increased military cooperation in the past two years. The United States provides military assistance programs primarily focused on developing an Armenian peace-keeping unit. Some military training has a limited CT-related component.

GOAM IDENTIFIES AREAS FOR POTENTIAL ASSISTANCE

14. (SBU) GOAM representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Defense, National Security Service, Border Guard Service, and National Police attended the coordination meeting. The GOAM officials expressed gratitude for the CT assistance CTAG members had provided to date, and hoped for increased future cooperation. Arman Israelyan, Head of the MFA's Global Security Division, outlined potential areas of future CT assistance to the GOAM:

- Further CT training programs that support GOAM efforts to develop a coordinated response to terrorist incidents among agencies.
- Provision of equipment to promote GOAM CT efforts.
- Increased intelligence sharing and coordination.
- Assistance in preventing a continued 'brain-drain' of Armenian scientists, particularly those who worked in the Soviet weapons of mass destruction research and development sector.
- Help in strengthening Armenian regulatory agencies, particularly those involving nuclear power and export control.
- Assistance to GOAM bodies in developing effective CT legislation and implementation measures.

15. (SBU) CTAG members agreed to meet in several months to discuss new initiatives and further plans for CT cooperation.

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